



# MPCA moves to shut down Minneapolis shredder

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St. Paul, Minn. — The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency is taking legal steps to stop operations at Northern Metal Recycling. The unusual legal steps are underway because MPCA officials say Northern Metals provided misleading information in the process of getting its air quality permit in 2012, and as a result is polluting the air in north Minneapolis.

The facility, which operates a metal shredder at the site, is believed to be a primary source of particulate emissions that have repeatedly violated state air quality standards near the site since 2014, when the MPCA began operating air monitors near the facility.

In another legal step the MPCA filed a motion for temporary injunction in Ramsey County District Court to immediately stop the activities at the site that are believed to be contributing to the violations. If the court grants the injunction the company must cease shredding operations at the site, located at 2800 Pacific St., Minneapolis.

“Based on our investigations and discussions with the company over the last year, we believe either the company did not truthfully disclose its emissions from this facility when it was last permitted, or that it has added or changed emission sources since the permit was issued without informing us, or both,” said MPCA Assistant Commissioner David Thornton.

“Either of these conditions is a serious violation of state and federal air quality laws and cause for permit revocation,” Thornton said. “The revocation process takes some time to play out, so while that’s underway we are also asking the court to enjoin Northern Metals from further operations. The violations of air quality standards that have been occurring in this area must be stopped.”

“We use many strategies in our efforts to make permitted facilities comply with the environmental protections we’re charged to enforce,” Thornton said. “Moving to close a facility and revoke their permit is a very rare step for the MPCA.”

Thornton said if the permit is revoked, the company would be free to reapply for another one but that a new permit would have to properly account for and control emissions.

The MPCA began monitoring air quality near Northern Metals after the permit was issued in 2012. The monitors began detecting elevated particulates almost immediately, at levels that have frequently exceeded state standards. Analysis of a year’s worth of data the MPCA recently completed also found that levels of airborne heavy metals near the site are near or above health benchmarks.

Thornton said the MPCA has tried to negotiate with the company and has been in and out of court with them for more than a year, but the company has been uncooperative in addressing the problems.

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